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ABSTRACT

The 1970's ushered in widespread population deconcentration, seen in the pervasive shift of the United States population down the size-of-place scale. To document population changes in various sized places in the country from 1950 to 1980 and to show the pervasiveness of urban-rural deconcentration in nonmetropolitan areas, researchers examined census data from 1950 to 1980 and data from metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties and places, taking into account metropolitan adjacency and economic homogeneity. According to the data, the 1970's saw continued suburbanization, with absolute declines in the nation's larger metropolitan centers. Growth rates exceeded the national average in smaller metropolitan cities and exceeded the metropolitan rates in nonmetropolitan areas. In nonmetropolitan areas, rural population growth exceeded urban population growth. Not simply restricted to areas within easy commuting distance of larger nonmetropolitan urban centers, rural growth spread to less urban nonmetropolitan areas as well. The pattern of nonmetropolitan decentralization was geographically and spatially pervasive, affecting most regions (especially the West) and occurring in the least urbanized and most remote parts of the country. The data suggest a historic shift in the patterns of population settlement in the United States. (SB)

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THE RURAL GROWTH REVIVAL IN NONMETROPOLITAN AMERICA: EVIDENCE OF PERVASIVENESS

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THE RURAL GROWTH REVIVAL IN NONMETROPOLITAN AMERICA: EVIDENCE OF PERVASIVENESS

The demographic landscape of the United States has undergone a rather dramatic transformation over the past decade. During the 1970s we witnessed: (1) a process of population deconcentration away from the industrialized Northeast and North Central regions to the West and South, and (2) a "turnaround" in population growth and net migration between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas (Beale, 1975; Wardwell and Brown, 1980; Beale and Fuguitt, 1978). In this paper, we show that the transition to population deconcentration in the 1970s is not limited to regional or metro-nonmetro shifts, but is also evident by widespread differential growth down the urban size-of-place hierarchy within both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas of the United States.

Until at least 1970, population growth in the United States could best be described as both urban and nodal in character. The labor displaced by the mechanization of agriculture and the excess fertility in rural areas contributed significantly to the rapid growth of cities and towns. Moreover, the urbanization process was accelerated by the economic opportunities available in major metropolitan centers, as the United States was transformed from an agricultural to an industrial economy. Major metropolitan cities not only acted as magnets for the indigenous population seeking jobs, but also for immigrants from abroad. Many of the early major cities in the United States (e.g., New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia) exploded in growth as a result of the influx of new immigrants.

This pattern of population settlement was beneficial in promoting certain agglomeration economies and other economies of scale, contributing

to differential growth among places as they moved up the urban size-of-place scale. However, as the metropolis grew ever larger in size, more efficient modes of short-term transportation (e.g., street cars, automobiles) were developed, allowing workers to separate places of work from places of residence (Tobin, 1976; Long, 1981). Metropolitan deconcentration or suburbanization was born. Indeed, the history of U.S. metropolitan population change can be summarized as one of population concentration into metropolitan areas, but deconcentration within the metropolitan region. This historical process was characterized by the emergence and rapid growth of many smaller towns and cities under the umbrella of the metropolitan center. At the same time, the growth of many older metropolitan cities has waned, particularly during the low fertility era of the 1970s (Long and Frey, 1982).

Nonmetropolitan population patterns have also undergone a number of recent changes. Historically, differential growth has occurred in larger nonmetropolitan places, many of which subsequently "grew up" to be reclassified as metropolitan (Forstall, 1981). As with the metropolitan sector, nonmetropolitan urban growth was fueled by rural-to-urban migration as farm workers were displaced by the mechanization and consolidation of agricultural production. Such changes generated considerable concern about the "dying" rural farming community, which depended on agriculture for its economic livelihood. Indeed, this concern peaked with the enactment of the Rural Development Act of 1972 which addressed issues and stimulated research dealing with the vitality of local rural economies, and with rural growth and decline processes. Much of this concern, however, was laid to rest by reports in the early 1970s that nonmetropolitan

areas were growing more rapidly than metropolitan areas and, for the first time, were experiencing net migration gains at the expense of metropolitan areas (Beale, 1975; Tucker, 1976).

More recently, there has been growing evidence of faster rural than urban growth within nonmetropolitan areas of the United States (Fuguitt, Lichter, and Beale, 1981; Long, 1981; Long and DeAre, 1982). Indeed, Lichter and Fuguitt (1982) have shown that about two-thirds of the nonmetropolitan counties experienced more rapid rural than urban growth during the 1970s. During the 1950s, this was true of only about one quarter of the nonmetropolitan counties. The nonmetropolitan sector thus appears to be entering a period of population redistribution which had earlier characterized metropolitan America. That is, the 1970s have not only ushered in a period of redistribution away from metropolitan areas and toward nonmetropolitan areas, but has also been marked by deconcentration within the nonmetropolitan sector.

In this paper, two broad objectives are envisaged. First, we document population changes within various size-of-place categories in the United States during the 1950 to 1980 period, highlighting the population shift down the urban size-of-place scale in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. We also examine the contribution of various sized places to absolute U.S. population growth. As we will illustrate, smaller urban places and rural areas have contributed disproportionately to aggregate population change in the United States.

A second objective is to show the rather pervasive character of urban-rural deconcentration within the nonmetropolitan United States. Toward this end, we examine the extent to which rural growth and the

urban-rural turnaround is spatially pervasive across regions of the United States. Furthermore, despite common knowledge that the revival of nonmetropolitan growth is not limited to counties in close proximity to metropolitan areas (Beale and Fuguitt, 1978), relatively little is known about the relationship between metropolitan adjacency status and rural and urban population change in nonmetropolitan areas. For example, if limited to adjacent nonmetropolitan counties, the revival of rural growth may signal a continuation of historical patterns of population redistribution as the metropolis radiates outward and spills into smaller towns and the open countryside. Finally, if the rural growth revival simply reflects a continuation of the urbanization process as patterns of suburbanization are transplanted to highly urbanized nonmetropolitan areas, urban-rural deconcentration would be in evidence primarily in nonmetropolitan counties with large urban places (See Long, 1981; Fuguitt et al., 1981). As we shall illustrate in the following analysis, the rural growth revival was a spatially pervasive phenomenon of the 1970s, representing a departure from historic patterns of urbanization in the United States.

DATA AND METHODS

Data presented in this paper are from nonmetropolitan and metropolitan counties and places in the United States. County equivalent units are designated for SMSAs in the New England states where delineations are normally made on a township basis, with election districts used for Alaska. Unless otherwide indicated, a constant 1974 metropolitan definition is used throughout our analysis. Population figures for 1950, 1960,

1970, and 1980 are provided in the published Census reports.

Further residential refinement of our analysis of rural and urban growth is obtained through classification of nonmetropolitan counties by size-of-largest place at the beginning of each period, and also by whether they were "adjacent" or "nonadjacent" to an SMSA. In addition to geographic contiguity, counties were classified as adjacent if at least one percent of their labor force commuted to the metropolitan central county for work in 1970 (Hines et al., 1975). Although the regional distinctions we employ include those commonly used by the Census Bureau (i.e., Northeast, North Central, South, and West), we further delineate the United States into 26 relatively homogenous economic subgroups in order to provide greater specificiity in our regional analysis of urban-rural deconcentration within nonmetropolitan areas (See Fuguitt and Beale, 1978, for discussion of these subregions).

In much of the analysis to follow, we compare growth in incorporated places above 2500 population with growth outside these places. Prior to 1950, such comparisons would be tantamount to making urban-rural comparisons using the urban defintion then employed by the Census Bureau. However, it was then recognized that the thickly settled territory around metropolitan cities was urban in character, if not by administrative decree. Accordingly, the urban definition was expanded to include, in addition to incorporated places above 2500 population, the thickly settled areas around cities of 50,000 and unincorporated places over 2500 population. Our use of incorporated places of more than 2500 population constitutes about 80 percent of the official urban population within metropolitan areas in 1970. For nonmetropolitan areas, places of

more than 2500 population represents nearly 90 percent of the 1970 nonmetropolitan urban population (See Fuguitt et al., 1981). In both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas, the remaining population outside incorporated places of 2500 includes the densely settled fringe around central cities, residents in unincorporated places above 2500 population, villages of less than 2500 population, and the "open countryside," including the farm population. Our reference to "rural" and "urban," although useful for expository purposes, should not cloud our recognition of these fundamental distinctions.

RESULTS

Differential Growth by Size-of-Place

Shifts in population distribution are obviously fueled by differentials in growth across the various size-of-place categories. In Table 1, we present percentage growth rates by size-of-place at the beginning of each decade considered. Obviously, intra-decade growth rates vary slightly depending on whether a current (1950, 1963, 1974) or constant (1974) metropolitan definition is employed. Initially, we will compare both, and then subsequently conclude that the data reveal a consistent pattern of deconcentration both between and within metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas, regardless of current or constant metro definition.

In columns (2), (4), and (5) of Table 1, metropolitan and nonmetropolitan growth rates are defined using a constant 1974 metropolitan definition. Thus, a county that was defined as metropolitan in 1974 would be classified as metropolitan throughout the analysis of 1950-1980 growth rates. Such a definition means that some counties are prematurely

evaluated to metropolitan status. These counties may be called insipient SMSAs in that they eventually grew to be defined as metropolitan, and the growth observed in these areas might justifiably be argued to be "metropolitan" growth (Fuguitt et al., 1981).

The results using a 1974 metropolitan definition yield several interesting conclusions. First, we note the now familiar metropolitan-nonmetropolitan population turnaround. For the first time in the 1970s, metropolitan growth was less than nonmetropolitan growth (9.9 vs. 15.7). This is a substantial shift, especially when one considers that metropolitan areas were growing over 8 times faster than nonmetropolitan areas just two decades earlier in the 1950s (26.3 vs 3.0 percent). There is little doubt that the metropolitan-nonmetropolitan growth rates have undergone a rather sizeable shift over the thirty-year period.

The 1970s have also ushered in a period when, for the first time, metropolitan places larger than 200,000 population were experiencing absolute population decline. Moreover, only those metropolitan places of less than 25,000 population were experiencing growth rates above the national average of 11.4 percent. Growth outside metropolitan places of 2500 was particularly rapid during the 1970s, exceeded only by growth in metropolitan places less than 10,000 in size. Although growth outside places declined overtime in metropolitan areas, relative shifts in nonplace ("rural") growth have intensified in metropolitan areas. Growth outside urban places was 2.8 times faster than growth in "urban" places (48.2/17.2 = 2.8) in the 1950s, and 2.1 times faster in the 1960s. During the 1970s, growth outside urban places was 5.3 times faster than urban place growth, illustrating an intensified within-metro deconcentration.

This was due, in large part, to the recent absolute population declines observed in the largest metropolitan places.

Within the nonmetropolitan sector, places above 2,500 population were experiencing modest growth (14 percent) during the 1950s, although somewhat below the national average of 18.5 percent. Yet, for every nonmetropolitan size-of-place category considered, metro places of similar size were growing faster. Moreover, the growth rate outside nonmetropolitan places of 2500 was -1.7, presumably reflecting rural population losses out of agriculture. By 1970-80, we find a rather sizeable shift in urban and rural population change. Growth outside urban places was in excess of growth occurring in places (19.5 vs 8.5) over the last decade. And, without this rural growth, the nonmetropolitan growth rate as a whole would have remained smaller than the metropolitan growth during the 1970s. Places above 2500 population in nonmetropolitan areas grew at a rate less than metropolitan areas as a whole. Consequently the metro-nonmetro "turnaround" was caused chiefly by the remarkable surge in growth in largely rural areas outside places of 2500 population. Surely, the urban and nodel growth characteristic of the past in non-metropolitan areas has been replaced by a more dispersed pattern of population settlement.

Although this analysis of percentage growth rates has been based on a constant set of metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties as defined in 1974, some may suggest that our conclusions are due to the fact that some fast-growing nonmetropolitan counties were prematurely classified as metropolitan, thus accelerating metropolitan growth during the 1950s and 1960s, and downward biasing the nonmetropolitan growth rates.

Consequently, the rates presented in Columns (1), (3), and (5) in Table 1 are based on each county's metropolitan or nonmetropolitan status as defined at the beginning of each decade.

The examination of these current rates suggests that our earlier analysis tended to depress growth rates slightly in smaller-sized metropolitan places during the 1950s and 1960s. The lower rates based on a constant metro definition can be explained by the fact that, although nonmetropolitan counties prematurely classified as metropolitan were growing relatively rapidly by nonmetropolitan standards, they were nevertheless growing slowly by 1950-60 metropolitan standards. The result was to deflate the metropolitan growth in size-of-place categories of less than 50,000 population (compare columns 1 and 2). Similarly, rates based on a current metropolitan definition tended to accelerate the growth observed for all nonmetropolitan size-of-place categories, as many fast-growing nonmetropolitan counties in the 1950s, later reclassified as metropolitan by 1974, were included in the calculation of 1950-60 nonmetropolitan growth rates. Indeed, nonmetropolitan growth was nearly 10 percent during the 1950-60 period when using a current metropolitan definition, as opposed to the rather modest 3 percent based on a constant 1974 metropolitan definition.

Despite these differences, these results in no way detract from our general conclusion that the 1970s have witnessed a reversal from concentration to deconcentration within nonmetropolitan areas. Indeed, using a current metropolitan definition, we find a positive size-of-place effect on nonmetropolitan growth rates in the 1950s and 1960s and an inverse relationship during the deconcentration period of the 1970s.

Smaller places and rural areas are now growing more rapidly than larger-sized nonmetropolitan places. Consequently, because of the interpretative advantages of using the same set of counties as metropolitan or nonmetropolitan over the 30 year period, we have opted to use the constant 1974 metropolitan definition throughout the remainder of this paper. The reader should be aware that this has little effect on our metropolitan results in the 1950s, but tends to deflate nonmetro urban place growth rates in the 1950s and 1960s.

Although the growth rates just presented illustrate the pattern of deconcentration both in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas during the 1970s, metropolitan and urban growth may still be contributing larger shares to absolute U.S. population growth. That is, we may have relative deconcentration but absolute concentration. What is the spatial distribution of absolute growth in the United States during the 1950-80 period? This question is addressed by the data provided in Table 2.

Despite higher growth rates in nonmetropolitan areas than metropolitan areas during the 1970s, metropolitan areas nevertheless contributed about two-thirds to absolute U.S. population growth (column 6, Table 2). This still represents a significant change from the previous two decades when metropolitan growth represented over 90 percent of absolute growth in the population of the United States. This was due in part to large absolute population losses (1.7 million) in metropolitan places above 200,000 in population.

But perhaps the most interesting insight provided from the data presented in Table 2 is that most of the absolute growth in the United States during the 1970s took place in largely rural areas outside places

of 2500 population. The population growth outside of places represented about 75 percent of U.S. absolute growth during the 1970-80 period, up considerably from the 49 percent and 48 percent observed during the 1950s and 1960s. Equally surprising is that growth outside nonmetropolitan places of 2500 accounted for nearly 30 percent of U.S. absolute growth. This is remarkable in view of the absolute rural decline observed during the 1950s. Indeed, during the 1970-80 decade, about 80 percent of the absolute growth that occurred in nonmetropolitan areas took place outside places of 2500 or more population. Thus, deconcentration within nonmetropolitan areas is not only apparent in a relative sense based on differential growth rates, but in an absolute sense as well.

As we have illustrated, population deconcentration is characteristic of the 1970s, both for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. In the remainder of this paper, we elaborate this analysis by considering in depth the deconcentration process within nonmetropolitan areas. Our aim is to dramatize the pervasiveness of current patterns of urban-rural deconcentration across a variety of geographic and spatial settings.

The Transition to Nonmetropolitan Deconcentration

To elaborate our analysis of deconcentration in nonmetropolitan United States, we examine differential growth inside and outside of places of 2500 or more population. In the analysis above, we concluded that the rural growth in nonmetropolitan areas now exceeds that in urban areas, and that differential rural growth is largely responsible for the broader metro/nonmetro turnaround. In this section, we consider three interrelated questions: (1) to what extent is nonmetropolitan deconcentration evident across various regions of the United States; (2) to what

extent is urban-rural deconcentration simply rural growth occurring outside larger nonmetropolitan urban centers; and (3) to what extent is the nonmetropolitan urban-rural deconcentration an extension of metropolitan growth into nearby or adjacent nonmetropolitan areas? As we will show, the transition to nonmetropolitan deconcentration is geographically pervasive, affecting most regions and even occurring in the least urbanized and most remote parts of the United States.

Regional Patterns of Deconcentration. Table 3 provides percentage growth rates in places of 2500 or more (i.e., urban) and outside these places (i.e., rural) for each of the four Census regions. The data in column 5 illustrate the urban-rural turnaround from concentration to deconcentration, as rural areas grew more rapidly than urban areas for the first time in the 1970s. Rural areas grew by about 20 percent in the 1970s in comparison to 8.5 percent in urban areas.

To what extent is this urban-rural deconcentration pattern evident across the four regions of the United States? As the data in Table 3 reveal, this transition to differential rural growth is pervasive; each region experienced more rapid rural than urban growth rates during the 1970s. The most rapid rural growth occurred in the West (37.2), and the slowest rural growth in the North Central region (10.2). This is a significant change from the 1950s and 1960s when, except for the Northeast which experienced urban-rural deconcentration throughout the entire 1950-80 period, each of the regions experienced more rapid urban than rural growth. This suggests that urban-rural redistribution outside the Northeast may be evolving in much the same way that has characterized the Northeast since at least 1950.

Showing variations in deconcentration across four broad regions may mask important subregional variations, especially given the socioeconomic heterogeneity found within each region. We further elaborate our analysis by combining State Economic Areas into 26 subregions that are quite similar in social and economic characteristics (Fuguitt and Beale, 1978). A map of the United States which defines each subregion is provided in Figure 1.

In Table 4 we report differential rural and urban growth rates within each of the 26 subregions. These data reinforce our earlier conclusion concerning the geographic pervasiveness of urban-rural deconcentration within the nonmetropolitan United States. Upon examining the rural growth rates for each of the three time periods (Columns 2, 4, and 6), several rather significant changes are apparent. In the 1950s, 14 of the 26 subregions experienced rural decline as indicated by negative growth rates. The number of subregions with declining rural population dropped slightly to 10 during the 1960s. By the 1970s, not a single subregion experienced rural population decline. Rural growth rates were as high as 100 percent in the Florida Pennisula (Region 18), with the slowest growing rural populations found in the Central Corn Belt (region 16) and in the Mississippi Delta (region 8), each growing by less than 1 percent over the decade of the 1970s.

But the fact that rural populations are currently growing does not necessarily mean that these subregions are experiencing urban-rural deconcentration. Urban areas may still be experiencing more rapid growth. Close inspection of data in Table 4, however, reveals a widespread turnaround in rural-urban growth rates across the 26 subregions.

In the 1950s, only 6 of the 26 subregions were experiencing more rapid rural than urban growth rates. This number increased to 8 subregions during the 1960s. By 1970-80, 21 out of 26 subregions (i.e., about 80 percent) experienced differential rural growth. Only the Mississippi Delta (16), the Coastal Plain Tobacco Belt (14), the Central Corn Belt (8), and the Great Plains (22 and 23) experienced population concentration, as indicated by more rapid urban than rural growth.

Obviously, such results point to the fact that urban-rural deconcentration is not an isolated regional phenomenon, but rather a pervasive one affecting most parts of the country. Such findings dramatize the widespread occurrence of population deconcentration in the nonmetropolitan United States.

Deconcentration by Levels of Urbanization. Some may argue that this pattern of diffential rural growth is nothing more than suburbanization occurring outside nonmetropolitan urban centers. Such a finding would suggest that the process of deconcentration traditionally observed in metropolitan areas is not making its presence felt in nonmetropolitan America. To assess the empirical evidence for this argument, in Table 5 we present urban and rural growth rates by size of the largest place in the county (at the beginning of each decade). If deconcentration is taking place only in those counties that contain large urban places, suburbanization within nonmetropolitan areas may be proceeding in a manner similar to that experienced in metropolitan areas.

In column (5) of Table 5, we find that urban growth rates exceeded rural growth regardless of levels of local urbanization during the 1950s (See Panel 1). Indeed, the rural population actually declined in those

counties with places less than 10,000 in size. This pattern of rural decline persisted into the 1960s except that, for the first time, rural growth rates exceeded urban rates in counties with large urban centers. However, by 1970-80, we observe a rather sizeable turnaround in growth rates, with rural growth rates exceeding urban growth rates, regardless of size-of-largest-place (panel 3). Even in completely rural counties (size-of-largest-place less than 2500), the rural growth rates exceeded urban growth rates (17.4 vs 9.0 and 8.3). As these data suggest, rural growth is not simply restricted to areas within easy commuting distance of larger nonmetropolitan urban centers, but is spreading to less urban nonmetropolitan areas as well.

The data in Table 5 also suggest that the turnaround in differential rural growth (across size-of-largest-place categories) is geographically pervasive. In each of the four major census regions, rural growth rates exceeded urban growth rates during the 1970-80 period, regardless of size of largest place in the county. However, it should be noted that, except for the Northeast, the most rapid rural growth occurred in those counties with the largest urban centers in the 1970s.

Deconcentration by Metropolitan Proximity. It might be argued that the differential rural population growth in the 1970s is due to the rural growth represented by "spill-over" growth from surrounding metropolitan areas. Suburbanization may simply be extending beyond the rather arbitrary county boundaries of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas. This would suggest that the renewed nonmetropolitan and rural growth may merely be a continuation of the metropolitanization process as the metropolis expands outward.

As shown in Table 6, where rural and urban growth rates are calculated for nonmetropolitan areas both adjacent and nonadjacent to metropolitan areas, this explanation alone is insufficient. The turnaround to differential rural growth during the 1970s is not limited to those nonmetropolitan areas in close proximity (i.e., adjacent) to metropolitan areas. In column 5, which provides data for the U.S. as a whole, we find that regardless of adjacency status, the urban population grew more rapidly than the rural population in the 1950s and 1960s. The data also reveal that the rural population was growing in adjacent counties, but declining in nonadjacent counties in the 1950s and 1960s, suggesting an adjacency effect on rural growth rates. However, the pattern of rural-urban concentration evident in adjacent and nonadjacent counties during the 1950-70 period was reversed in the 1970s. Regardless of adjacency status, rural population increased more rapidly than its urban counterpart. For example, in nonadjacent counties, rural growth rates were nearly twice that of the urban population (16.7 vs 8.7). Obviously, the rural resurgence is not limited to expanded suburbanization beyond the boundaries of SMSAs.

In Table 6, we further elaborate this analysis by considering each region. The data again illustrate the pervasiveness of current deconcentration trends in nonmetropolitan America. Regardless of region or adjacency status, rural growth exceeded urban growth during the 1970s. This contrasts with the 1960s when urban growth rates were larger than rural growth rates in both adjacent and nonadjacent counties in the North Central, South, and West census regions.

To extend this analysis one step further, patterns of deconcentration

are further elaborated among nonmetropolitan areas which are nonadjacent to metropolitan areas. Is rural growth taking place in completely rural counties removed from the growth influences of nearby metropolitan areas? Or, is the differential rural growth in nonmetropolitan nonadjacent counties simply taking place in areas that contain larger urban centers? This issue is considered with the data presented in Table 7, where nonadjacent urban and rural growth rates are provided by size-of-largest-place in the county and by region.

Our analysis reveals that, even in nonadjacent counties, rural rates exceeded urban rates in the 1970s, regardless of levels of local urbanization (see column 5, Table 7). Indeed, completely rural nonadjacent counties grew more rapidly than the urban population in counties with urban places above 2500 in population. The completely rural, nonadjacent areas were actually exceeding growth rates for the U.S. as a whole during the 1970s (14.1 vs 11.4), whereas during the 1950s and 1960s they had experienced population decline. Differential rural growth has obviously trickled down to some of the most remote and less urbanized areas of the United States during the past decade.

In columns 1-4 of Table 7, this pattern of differential rural growth in the most remote areas is shown to occur within each region of the country. Again, regardless of size-of-largest place in the 1970s, rural rates exceeded urban rates. Growth rates in nonadjacent rural counties ranged from a low of 5.2 percent in the North Central region to a whooping 30.7 percent in the West. There can be little doubt that differential rural growth in the 1970s was a marked departure from traditional patterns of nonmetropolitan concentration favoring urban areas.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As we have shown, the 1970s have ushered in a period of widespread population deconcentration in the United States. Perhaps this is most graphically demonstrated by the rather pervasive shift of population down the size-of-place scale in the United States. Not only has suburbanization continued unabated in metropolitan areas, but the 1970s have also been marked by absolute declines in many of the nation's larger metropolitan centers, and by growth rates exceeding the national average in smaller metropolitan cities. Furthermore, nonmetropolitan areas are not only growing more rapidly than metropolitan areas, but rural population growth within nonmetropolitan areas now exceeds that of urban areas, reversing a trend that had characterized much of the nation since its inception. As the preceding analysis has underscored, this pattern of deconcentration within nonmetropolitan America is geographically and spatially pervasive, affecting most regions and occurring in the least urbanized and remotest parts of the United States. This suggests a historic shift in patterns of population settlement in the United States.

Perhaps the most important lesson learned from the previous decade of research on the so-called "turnaround" is that there is not a single or simple explanation of the dispersal of the U.S. population. The pervasive character of the urban-rural turnaround has greatly inhibited the identification of a common thread running through counties that have experienced renewed growth. Indeed, this is suggested by recent analyses (e.g., Heaton et al., 1981; Lichter and Fuguitt, 1982) which reveal that traditional models of net migration and population change are less efficacious (in a predictive sense) than they had been prior to the 1970s.

Perhaps one reason for this is that the factors at least partly responsible for population deconcentration are felt rather broadly across the nation. An obvious example here is the recent technological innovations related to transportation and communications systems (See Long, 1981; Lichter and Fuguitt, 1980). Surely representing one major transportation innovation, interstate highways may be viewed as threads stitching together America's metropolitan centers and in the process enveloping the nonmetropolitan periphery within the larger urban system. Hence the notion of the small, isolated rural community is probably a thing of the past. Population and economic activity can locate at ever greater distances from larger urban centers without loss of contact with them. This would suggest that as transportation and telecommunication systems further evolve, the dispersed pattern of population settlement first observed in the nonmetropolitan United States during the early 1970s is unlikely to quickly revert back to concentration. Commonly held explanations of "turnaround" growth (e.g., retirement; amenities; industrial decentralization) should therefore be more carefully couched in terms of such structural changes, the effects of which often reverberate throughout the nation.

Although explanations of the urban-rural turnaround remain in the neophyte stage, there nevertheless has been a recent redirection of research away from the description and explanation of these emerging trends, to providing a better understanding of the potential consequences of renewed nonmetropolitan and rural growth (e.g., Morrison and McCarthy, 1982; Wardwell, 1982). For example, how have local municipalities coped with growth-induced strains on existing community services? Will

population growth alter the very factors that attracted inmigrants to remote or rural settings (e.g., low taxes, preferences for rural living, low crime)? Such concerns arise not only from the purely quantitative shifts in population size, but also from "qualitative" changes caused by population change. For example, the turnaround migration of the elderly has affected the age profiles of many nonmetropolitan areas, altering local demands for the provision of age-related community services (See Clifford et al., 1983, for discussion). Another concern is whether the shifts of population to rural areas are accompanied by beneficial changes in local "human capital" (See Wardwell and Brown, 1980, Pp. 27-28). Has the drain on local human resources, historically endemic to rural America, been abated during the turnaround period of the 1970s and 1980s? Finally, preliminary evidence suggests that nonmetropolitan deconcentration is largely a white phenomenon (Heaton et al., 1982; Wardwell and Brown, 1980). What are the potential implications for patterns of racial residential segregation in the United States? Further efforts to examine both the quantitative and qualitative (or compositional) consequences of population growth are obviously needed to fully understand the implications of recent changes in U.S. settlement patterns.

In sum, this paper has provided further evidence of the widespread transition to population deconcentration observed in the United States during the 1950-80 period. The need to monitor such trends into the 1980s is apparent. Only time will fully reveal whether the urban-rural population reversal is a short-term perturbation in an evolving process of urbanization, or whether the 1970s signal a long standing pattern that will continue to alter the social, economic, and political fabric of

nation's nonmetropolitan and rural areas.

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Table 1. Percentage Change in Population by Initial Size of Place, 1950-1980

Initial Size of Place and Metro Status	1950 - 60		1960 - 70		1970 - 80
	1950 Metro	1974 Metro	1963 Metro	1974 Metro	1974 Metro
Metropolitan:					
500,000 or more	.3	.3	.2	.2	-5.2
200,000 - 499,999	15.6	15.6	12.3	12.3	- .3
50,000 - 199,999	17.1	17.1	10.4	10.4	5.6
25,000 - 49,999	25.9	28.9	22.7	22.7	6.8
10,000 - 24,999	48.7	46.2	30.7	29.3	15.5
2,500 - 9,999	63.7	55.4	40.5	37.4	21.4
All places 2,500 +	15.4	17.2	12.2	12.8	4.0
Outside places 2,500 +	56.5	48.2	26.9	26.9	21.2
Total Metro	25.3	26.3	16.4	17.1	9.9
Nonmetropolitan:					
25,000 +	21.9	10.3	11.0	4.4	6.9
10,000 - 24,999	21.6	15.7	9.3	7.2	7.5
2,500 - 9,999	18.7	13.9	10.0	7.9	10.3
All places 2,500 +	20.5	13.9	10.0	6.9	8.5
Outside places 2,500 +	4.5	-1.7	6.5	3.0	19.9
Total Nonmetro	9.7	3.0	7.8	4.3	15.7
Total U.S.	18.5	18.5	13.4	13.4	11.4

Table 2. Absolute Growth (in 1000's) by Initial Size of Place, 1950-1980

Initial Size of Place and 1974 Metro Status	Absolute Growth			Percent Distribution of Absolute Growth		
	1950-60	1960-70	1970-80	1950-60	1960-70	1970-80
Metropolitan:						
500,000 or more	89	46	-1652	.3	.2	-7.1
200,000 - 499,999	1611	1585	-39	5.8	6.6	- .2
50,000 - 199,999	2790	2272	1581	10.0	9.5	6.8
25,000 - 49,999	1797	2049	772	6.4	8.5	3.3
10,000 - 24,999	2796	2559	1679	10.0	10.7	7.2
2,500 - 9,999	3194	2763	1763	11.4	11.5	7.6
All places 2,500 +	12278	11273	4104	43.8	47.0	17.7
Outside places 2,500 +	14208	10444	10591	50.7	43.6	45.6
Total Metro	26486	21717	14695	94.5	90.6	63.2
Nonmetropolitan:						
25,000 +	259	165	317	.9	.7	1.4
10,000 - 24,999	849	460	514	3.0	1.9	2.2
2,500 - 9,999	1006	623	858	3.6	2.6	3.7
All places 2,500 +	2114	1248	1690	7.5	5.2	7.3
Outside places 2,500 +	-588	1008	6889	-2.1	4.2	29.6
Total Nonmetro	1526	2256	8549	5.4	9.4	36.8
Total U.S.	28013	23973	23244	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3. Percentage Population Change In and Outside of Places of 2,500 or More by Region, 1950-1980

Initial Size and 1974 Metro	Region				
	Northeast	North Central	South	West	U.S.
1950-60:					
Places 2,500 +	.6	11.4	18.0	24.0	13.9
Outside places 2,500 +	10.9	-.4	-7.6	10.6	-1.7
1960-70:					
Places 2,500 +	-2.4	6.3	8.3	12.4	6.9
Outside places 2,500 +	14.2	.6	.5	7.9	3.0
1970-80:					
Places 2,500 +	-4.2	4.0	9.6	25.6	8.5
Outside places 2,500 +	20.6	10.2	21.9	37.2	19.9

Table 4. Percentage Population Change In and Outside Places of 2,500 or More by Beale Region, 1950-1980

	1950-60		1960-70		1970-80	
	In	Outside	In	Outside	In	Outside
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Northern New England - St Lawrence	6.7	5.6	-3.2	7.2	-5.0	17.7
Northeastern Metropolitan Belt	8.1	26.6	4.3	28.9	2.1	32.6
Mohawk Valley and New York - Pennsylvania Border	-2.7	11.7	-5.0	9.9	-7.2	12.3
Northern Appalachian Coal Fields	-3.4	- 1.2	-2.1	1.6	-4.4	16.9
Lower Great Lakes Industrial	14.7	18.0	7.0	12.9	1.3	13.5
Upper Great Lakes	2.3	2.8	-2.4	10.9	-1.7	27.1
Dairy Belt	6.7	- .9	8.2	4.2	7.2	16.7
Central Corn Belt	12.7	- 1.8	8.8	- 4.7	3.9	.7
Southern Corn Belt	5.2	- 9.2	4.9	- 5.0	4.4	9.0
Southern Interior Uplands	16.7	- 7.1	17.2	3.0	12.2	18.3
Southern Appalachian Coal Fields	-7.7	-17.0	- .5	-12.7	5.9	24.2
Blue Ridge, Great Smokies, and Great Valley	15.0	- 3.4	9.8	6.2	12.1	23.6
Southern Piedmont	19.3	- 2.4	5.4	7.7	2.5	21.0
Coastal Plain Tobacco and Peanut Belt	25.1	.8	4.2	- 1.8	14.9	14.4
Old Coastal Plain Cotton Belt Plain	21.2	-13.4	7.9	- 5.0	8.0	13.3
Mississippi Delta	22.2	-19.0	9.5	-17.2	5.9	.4
Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Coast	38.3	17.0	13.3	12.4	8.7	28.5
Florida Peninsula	42.4	83.3	16.4	55.6	27.8	99.2
East Texas and Adjoining Coastal Plain	11.2	-18.5	10.4	- .2	14.6	25.3
Ozark - Ouachita Uplands	5.2	-11.9	10.2	8.2	11.0	28.3
Rio Grande	36.4	2.8	3.8	-3.4	14.8	32.2
Southern Great Plains	15.8	-13.1	- .1	-10.1	8.1	5.9
Northern Great Plains	23.9	- 7.1	10.1	- 8.8	14.8	5.8
Rocky Mountains, Mormon Valleys, and Columbia Basin	16.2	4.1	8.6	3.9	20.0	37.8
North Pacific Coast (including Alaska)	14.0	21.5	17.3	13.3	22.6	37.4
The Southwest (including Hawaii)	28.3	18.3	22.3	17.1	40.3	42.7

Table 5. Percentage Population Change In and Outside of Places of 2,500 or More by Size of Largest Place (SLP) and Region, 1950-1980

1974 Metro	Region				
	Northeast	North Central	South	West	U.S.
1950-60:					
SLP 10,000 +					
In	.0	12.5	19.0	22.6	13.4
Outside	13.1	8.9	- 1.7	13.5	6.6
SLP 2,500 - 10,000					
In	3.5	9.4	16.9	25.9	14.7
Outside	9.7	-3.0	-10.1	10.2	-4.7
SLP LT 2,500					
Outside	5.0	-5.1	- 7.5	7.3	-4.7
1960-70:					
SLP 10,000 +					
In	-3.1	7.2	6.7	14.4	6.6
Outside	16.8	8.2	7.1	10.7	9.9
SLP 2,500 - 10,000					
In	.5	4.7	10.6	8.5	7.6
Outside	9.6	-2.2	- 2.7	6.7	- .8
SLP LT 2,500					
Outside	11.2	-3.9	- .8	3.8	- .7
1970-80:					
SLP 10,000 +					
In	-4.4	3.6	8.9	27.3	8.3
Outside	20.7	12.0	25.5	39.5	22.9
SLP 2,500 - 10,000					
In	-3.2	4.8	10.6	21.0	9.0
Outside	18.2	10.0	20.6	34.9	18.1
SLP LT 2,500					
Outside	25.5	7.6	18.8	34.6	17.4

Table 6. Percentage Population Change In and Outside of Places of 2,500 or More by Adjacency Status and Region, 1950-1980

1974 Metro	Region				
	Northeast	North Central	South	West	U.S.
1950-60:					
Adjacent					
In	-.2	12.3	19.0	28.3	13.9
Outside	13.2	5.0	-5.4	11.9	1.7
Nonadjacent					
In	4.4	10.3	16.7	20.4	14.0
Outside	5.1	-5.5	-10.1	9.4	-5.4
1960-70:					
Adjacent					
In	-1.9	7.4	8.4	19.5	7.7
Outside	16.7	4.5	3.0	12.2	6.5
Nonadjacent					
In	-4.8	5.1	8.2	6.1	6.0
Outside	7.0	-3.5	-2.3	3.9	-1.3
1970-80:					
Adjacent					
In	-4.3	3.7	10.6	28.4	8.4
Outside	21.5	12.1	24.6	42.2	22.3
Nonadjacent					
In	-3.4	4.3	8.3	22.7	8.7
Outside	17.8	8.0	18.4	32.2	16.7

Table 7. Percentage Population Change In and Outside of Places of 2,500 or More by Size of Largest Place (SLP) and Region, Nonadjacent, 1950-1980

Nonadjacent 1974 Metro	Region				
	Northeast	North Central	South	West	U.S.
1950-60:					
SLP 10,000 +					
In	5.8	10.9	18.9	23.6	15.3
Outside	12.5	2.2	-1.3	20.1	4.1
SLP 2,500 - 10,000					
In	2.1	9.4	14.4	16.4	12.3
Outside	3.2	-8.6	-12.9	4.4	-8.8
SLP LT 2,500					
Outside	- .5	-6.5	-11.0	6.7	-7.1
1960-70:					
SLP 10,000 +					
In	-5.5	6.0	6.4	7.1	5.7
Outside	8.3	6.9	5.5	7.9	6.6
SLP 2,500 - 10,000					
In	-3.4	3.7	10.7	4.6	6.5
Outside	6.2	-8.2	- 6.5	.8	-5.5
SLP LT 2,500					
Outside	6.1	-5.5	- 2.8	2.6	-2.8
1970-80:					
SLP 10,000 +					
In	-4.3	4.3	7.9	23.5	8.6
Outside	16.2	14.3	21.8	35.6	21.2
SLP 2,500 - 10,000					
In	-1.5	4.3	8.9	21.3	8.8
Outside	18.1	5.5	16.9	29.5	14.8
SLP LT 2,500					
Outside	20.3	5.2	16.7	30.7	14.1

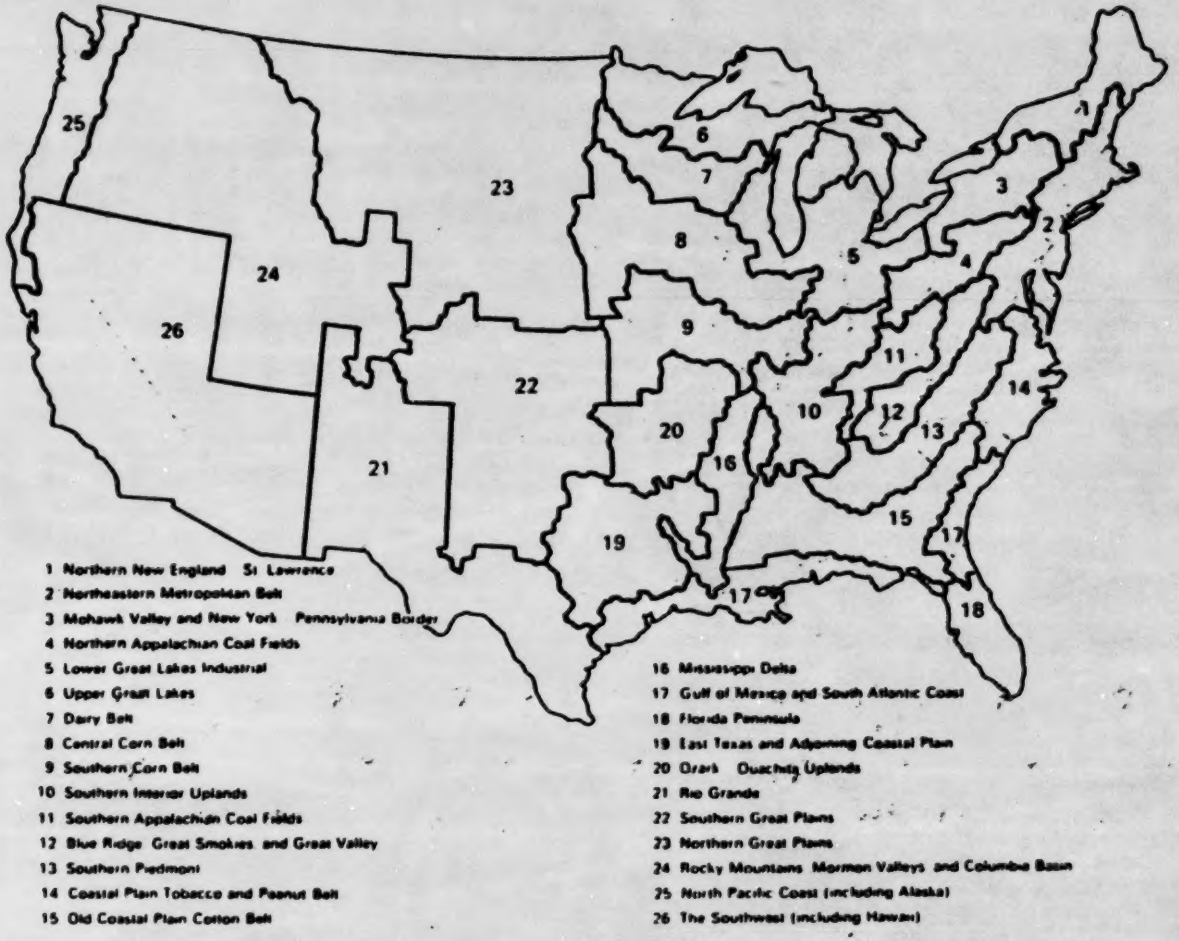
1 Northern New England St Lawrence
2 Northeastern Metropolitan Belt
3 Mohawk Valley and New York Pennsylvania Border
4 Northern Appalachian Coal Fields
5 Lower Great Lakes Industrial
6 Upper Great Lakes
7 Dairy Belt
8 Central Corn Belt
9 Southern Corn Belt
10 Southern Interior Uplands
11 Southern Appalachian Coal Fields
12 Blue Ridge Great Smokies and Great Valley
13 Southern Piedmont
14 Coastal Plain Tobacco and Peanut Belt
15 Old Coastal Plain Cotton Belt
16 Mississippi Delta
17 Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Coast
18 Florida Peninsula
19 East Texas and Adjoining Coastal Plain
20 Ozark Ouachita Uplands
21 Rio Grande
22 Southern Great Plains
23 Northern Great Plains
24 Rocky Mountains Mormon Valleys and Columbia Basin
25 North Pacific Coast (including Alaska)
26 The Southwest (including Hawaii)

Figure 1. Subregions for the Analysis of U.S. Nonmetropolitan Population Change